



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
250 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108-4619

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GOVERNOR

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JUDYANN BIGBY, MD
SECRETARY

JOHN AUERBACH
COMMISSIONER

May 2009

Dear Colleagues:

In 2006, the Massachusetts State Legislature made funding available for the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) to determine the need for home and community-based services and to create an economic profile of adults with neurological and physical disabilities and their families. In collaboration with the University of Massachusetts Center for Survey Research, the Disability Policy Consortium (DPC) and the Home and Community Based Services Committee of the DPC a study was designed to examine the unmet needs of adults with disabilities age 18 -59 and their informal caregivers. Two reports were published in July 2008:

- (1) *Study of the Unmet Needs of Adults with Disabilities in Massachusetts, 2007, and*
- (2) *Unmet Needs of Adults with Disabilities in Massachusetts – Interviews with Caregivers, 2007.*

These reports are a unique effort to look at an underserved group. These surveys provide an opportunity to learn about the unmet needs of people with disabilities and to consider the need for home and community based services from the perspective of adults age 18 - 59 with disabilities and their informal caregivers.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health, together with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Dr. JudyAnn Bigby, is committed to addressing the needs of people with disabilities across the lifespan. In the last decade, MDPH along with other healthcare entities across the Commonwealth, have been working together to eliminate health disabilities among people with disabilities. The MDPH Office on Health and Disability – funded through a grant from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – has been in the forefront both nationally and within Massachusetts addressing the public health needs and concerns of persons with disabilities. The collaboration it took to produce these reports demonstrate our commitment to work closely with individuals with disabilities, their family members, advocates, state agency representatives, researchers, and service professionals to reduce health disparities for people with disabilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Auerbach".

John Auerbach
Commissioner